United Nations A 65/520

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 October 2010
English
Original: Arabic

Sixty-fifth session
Agenda items 36, 52 and 60

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Letter dated 15 October 2010 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly

Israel continues to occupy the Syrian Golan, in defiance of the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and in violation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations. Israel persists in its refusal to return the occupied Syrian Golan to the Syrian motherland and to comply with resolutions of international legitimacy, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981). It continues to pursue a policy of terrorizing and oppressing the Syrian citizens of the Golan, throwing them into prison, expropriating land, expanding the settlements, plundering the natural resources of the Golan and laying mines there.

Not content with infringing the human rights of the Syrian Arab citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan, Israel has also damaged the environment and the means of livelihood of the Syrian citizens of the Golan. In this connection, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic should like to draw your attention to the grave violations which the Israeli occupation authorities have recently committed in the occupied Syrian Golan; they have deliberately stolen water from Mas'adah Lake in the occupied Syrian Golan, causing the area of the lake to shrink, inflicting huge material losses — of some $20 million — as thousands of fish have died and the apple harvest has collapsed, and turning the area into an arid, semi-desert zone, which has been stripped of vegetation. The Israeli occupation forces furthermore pump water from the lake to the farms of Israeli settlers and into artificial

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reservoirs, even though the reservoirs are full of water. In addition to the losses already mentioned, the continuation of these operations is expected to generate losses of around $10 million this year. In addition to stealing the water, Israel distributes irrigation water inequitably, giving Syrian farmers already reeling under the weight of the occupation less than half as much water from Mas'adah Lake as they give to Israeli settlers and charging them more for it. Thus, Syrian farmers were given 3.5 million m^3 of irrigation water this year, at a cost of $3 million, as compared with the settlers, who received 24 million m^3, at a cost of $7 million.

These are grave violations of General Assembly resolution 64/185, entitled "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources", in which the General Assembly reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land and water, and demands that Israel cease the exploitation, damage, cause of loss or depletion of, or endangerment of the natural resources in the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls on the international community to bear its responsibilities by preventing Israel from pursuing its violations and compelling it to desist from performing any act involving the exploitation, damage, cause of loss or depletion of water resources in the occupied Syrian Golan, in implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, in particular the above-mentioned General Assembly resolution 64/185.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to bring pressure to bear on Israel to compel it to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy. Any failure to bring genuine international pressure to bear on Israel to implement Security Council resolution 497 (1981) will only encourage it to temporize with regard to complying with this resolution, and with all the other international resolutions calling on it to cease its occupation of the Syrian Golan.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, at its sixty-fifth session, under agenda item 36, entitled "The situation in the Middle East", agenda item 52, entitled "Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories" and agenda item 60, entitled "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources."

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative